

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations  
and is not a part of the Official Record

## **BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES**

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

**IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.**

**As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,  
please do not report the images to the  
Image Problem Mailbox.**

**THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)**

(51) International Patent Classification <sup>5</sup> :	A1	(11) International Publication Number:	WO 92/20899
E21B 33/12, B29C 67/14		(43) International Publication Date:	26 November 1992 (26.11.92)

(74) Agents: ISAAC, John, L. et al.; The Gates Rubber Company, Patent/Legal Dept., 900 S. Broadway, Denver, CO 80209 (US).

**(43) International Publication Date:** 26 November 1992 (26.11.92)

**(81) Designated States:** AT (European patent), AU, BE (European patent), BR, CA, CH (European patent), DE (European patent), DK, DK (European patent), ES (European patent), FI, FR (European patent), GB (European patent), GR (European patent), IT (European patent), JP, KR, LU (European patent), MC (European patent), NL (European patent), NO, RU, SE (European patent).

**Published**  
*With international search report.*

An expendable, molded device is disclosed. The device is a composite of resin and fiber molded into a preselected shape. The composite includes an effective amount of fiber having an aspect ratio sufficient to produce a device with high compressive and tensile strength but having limited abrasion resistance. Use: Tools for earth drilling.

**FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY**

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT	Austria	FI	Finland	ML	Mali
AU	Australia	FR	France	MN	Mongolia
BB	Barbados	GA	Gabon	MR	Mauritania
BE	Belgium	GB	United Kingdom	MW	Malawi
BF	Burkina Faso	GN	Guinea	NL	Netherlands
BG	Bulgaria	GR	Greece	NO	Norway
BJ	Benin	HU	Hungary	PL	Poland
BR	Brazil	IE	Ireland	RO	Romania
CA	Canada	IT	Italy	RU	Russian Federation
CF	Central African Republic	JP	Japan	SD	Sudan
CG	Congo	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	SE	Sweden
CH	Switzerland	KR	Republic of Korea	SN	Senegal
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	LI	Liechtenstein	SU	Soviet Union
CM	Cameroon	LK	Sri Lanka	TD	Chad
CS	Czechoslovakia	LU	Luxembourg	TG	Togo
DE	Germany	MC	Monaco	US	United States of America
DK	Denmark	MG	Madagascar		
ES	Spain				

## EXPENDABLE COMPOSITE FIBER DEVICE

1

Background of the Invention

5

Field of the Invention

10 The present invention relates to metal replacement components or parts and, more particularly, to composite structures for metal replacement. Specifically, the present invention relates to devices having high tensile and compressive strengths yet are readily expendable by abrasive destruction.

15

Description of the Prior Art

Many components and tools in a wide variety of industries and product applications are made from steel, iron, aluminum and other metals because of their useful physical properties. A few of the major physical properties of such metal components and tools are their hardness, their high tensile strength as well as their high compressive strength. There is currently a desire in a variety of industries, as well as in a variety of product applications, to replace at least some of these metal components or tools with components or tools made from a nonmetallic material. A major concern for such alternative materials has generally been weight, although the material selected must perform all the functions of the original metal components or tools. One such industry is the aircraft industry wherein metal parts, including wing skin, have been replaced with composite material in lieu of metals. Likewise, the automobile industry has replaced numerous trim parts and body parts with composite materials in lieu of the original metal materials, again reducing weight while maintaining strength and environmental resistance.

35

One industry of particular concern is the well drilling industry wherein many parts and tools are metal and used for their physical property of high tensile and compressive

1 strength. In this particular industry, many of these parts  
and tools need to be placed in a well, used, and then  
"drilled through" or abraded away at a later time rather  
than being physically removed from the well in tact.  
5 Typically, drill bits designed specifically to drill through  
rock are not of an optimum or especially desirable design  
for drilling through and destroying such metal components or  
tools. This situation necessitates either accepting a much  
10 slower rate of travel of the rock drill bit while it is in  
fact drilling through the metal component and abrading it,  
or pulling what is possibly an extremely long string of pipe  
from the well bore in order to attach a different style of  
drill bit onto the end of the string and then sending it  
back down into the well to drill through the metal part.  
15 The selected method employed is generally determined by the  
then current depth of the well as opposed to the rate at  
which the then current "rock bit" is able to drill through  
the metal parts. In either event, each of these two methods  
of drilling through and expending the metal part or tool  
20 substantially decreases the average drilling rate of travel,  
which is a highly undesirable situation in the drilling  
industry.

In the above instance, it is a desire in the drilling  
industry to replace at least some of these metal tools or  
25 components with tools or components made from a nonmetal  
material that can be more easily and more quickly drilled  
through with standard rock drilling bits, while at the same  
time performing all the other functions of the original  
metal downhole parts or tools. Examples of such tools  
30 include mandrels and plugs, while inflatable packer elements  
may also be included in this grouping.

A wide variety of different materials have been  
investigated for the purpose of replacing metal parts or  
tools. Such materials have included a wide variety of  
35 plastics as well as a range of phenolic resins, either  
unreinforced, filled with powers, or filled with short  
fibers (i.e. 1/4 inch or less) of cotton or glass. While  
these phenolic resin materials have been satisfactory for  
fabricating some specific parts which perform certain

1 functions, many metal replacement opportunities are not open  
to such materials because the tensile strengths, sheer  
strengths, stiffness and other important properties are not  
anywhere near those of the metal materials which are to be  
5 replaced. This is particularly true in the well drilling  
industry, wherein metal replacement parts and tools have  
been manufactured from phenolic resins reinforced with short  
fibers of glass. Thus, there remains a distinct need in  
many industries and product applications for metal  
10 replacement parts, components and tools capable of meeting  
all of the desirable and needed physical properties  
equivalent to those of the original metal components or  
tools.

15 Summary of the Invention

Accordingly, it is one object of the present invention  
to provide metal replacement components and tools having the  
same or better physical properties as those of the original  
20 metal components and tools which are being replaced.

It is another object of the present invention to  
provide a composite material capable of being molded to  
various shapes and forms to provide nonmetallic parts and  
tools.

25 It is yet another object of the present invention to  
provide nonmetallic substitute parts and tools which are  
expendable and readily abraded.

A further object of the present invention is to provide  
a composite material molded into a preselected shape to form  
30 components and tools for the well drilling industry which  
are readily drilled through.

To achieve the foregoing and other objects and in  
accordance with a purpose of the present invention, as  
embodied and broadly described herein, an expendable, molded  
35 device is disclosed. The device is preferably a composite  
of resin and fiber molded into a preselected shape. The  
composite includes an effective amount of fiber having an  
aspect ratio sufficient to produce a device with high  
compressive and tensile strength but having limited abrasion

1 resistance. In one particularly preferred embodiment of the  
invention, the device is in the form of a downhole tool for  
use in a well bore, wherein the composite fiber aspect ratio  
provides a sufficiently low abrasion resistance to permit  
5 the tool to be destroyed by drilling using a rock drill bit.

#### Brief Description of the Drawings

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in  
10 and form a part of the specification, illustrate preferred  
embodiments of the present invention and together with a  
description, serve to explain the principles of the  
invention. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a schematic illustrating a  
15 sheet of the unmolded compound utilized to form the  
composite of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a plurality of the  
sheets as illustrated in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a perspective schematic view of a drill well  
20 mandrel formed using the present invention;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged, sectional view of a portion of  
the threads from a mandrel made with prior art composite  
material;

Fig. 5 is an enlarged, section view of the threads of a  
25 mandrel similar to that of Fig. 4 but formed from the  
composite of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a side schematic view of a molding device  
useful in producing a composite tool of the present  
invention;

30 Fig. 7 is an end view of the device illustrated in Fig.  
6. with the premolded composite material in position for  
molding to form a mandrel tool;

Fig. 8 is a top plan view of a fabric reinforcement  
useful in another embodiment of the present invention;

35 Fig. 9 is a schematic illustrating a mold portion with  
a composite precursor for another embodiment of the present  
invention; and

Fig. 10 illustrates the formation of yet another  
embodiment of the present invention utilizing the mold  
arrangement illustrated in Fig. 9.



### Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Referring to Figs. 1-3, sheet 10 is a composite made up of a plurality of fibers 12 embedded in a resin 14. While the fibers 12 may be random in nature, they are preferably oriented in the general direction of the greatest forces to be applied to the finished part, which in the case of a mandrel 16 (Fig. 3) is the longitudinal axis 15 of the sheet 10.

Fig. 2 illustrates the stacking of a plurality of these sheets 10, which stack 11 is then utilized to form the molded structure 16 as illustrated in Fig. 3. In this specifically illustrated embodiment, the molded structural device 16 particularly illustrated is that of a downhole mandrel useful in drilling well bores. It should be noted, however, that the present invention may be used for any type of expendable or destructible structural device that is designed to replace metal components or tools currently in use, and thus have the structural and tensile strength of metal but have low abrasive strength so as to be readily expendable. Specific examples in the drilling industry include mandrels, plugs and packers.

Referring to the preferred, illustrated embodiment, the mandrel 16 is basically a tube formed with external threads 18 on each end thereof, and internal threads, 20 on one end thereof. A mandrel is a tubular device that is placed in bores holes, one atop the other, with an area of the bore hole exposed where there is no mandrel. Thus, an area can be isolated for pumping purposes. However, when it is desired to move operations to another portion of the bore hole, the mandrels must be removed or destroyed in place. Previous hereto, rock drilling bits abraded the metal mandrels very slowly. The alternate maneuver was to insert a metal drilling bit and then change back to a rock drilling bit after the mandrels were destroyed. In either case, a great deal of time was expended.

As I stated earlier, replacement metal devices and components of various sorts have been previously addressed by various industries. Phenolic resins, either

1 unreinforced, filled with powders or filled with short  
fibers of cotton or glass, have been utilized. However,  
parts fabricated from such composites have been  
unsatisfactory in certain applications because their tensile  
5 strengths, sheer strengths, stiffness and other important  
parameters have not been nearly as great as those of the  
metal components they were designed to replace. In  
accordance with the present invention, however, it has been  
determined that certain combinations of materials and  
10 methods allow replacement parts for metal to be designed  
from resins reinforced by elongated fibrous materials.  
Preferred resins include, but are not limited to, epoxies,  
vinyl esters and polyesters, in combination with long (i.e.  
greater than 1/2 inch) fibers, including but not limited to  
15 glass fibers, aramid fibers and carbon fibers. While these  
long fiber composites typically display greatly improved  
bulk physical properties as compared to the short fiber  
phenolic materials previously described, the present  
invention also provides a distinct advantage in that by  
20 controlling the fiber volume, fiber length and fiber  
orientation, both before and during the molding process, the  
physical properties in specific areas or portions of the  
part can be engineered in order to better resist the forces  
applied to those specific portions of the part when the part  
25 is put into use. Thus, composite metal replacement parts  
having varied properties within itself may be designed  
utilizing the composite arrangement of the present  
invention.

As indicated above, the preferred resins include  
30 epoxies, vinyl esters and polyesters. The phenolics  
previously utilized in prior art composites are not useful  
with the present invention, even in conjunction with long  
fiber materials. This is because it was found that the  
materials compounded from phenolic typically displayed  
35 physical properties that were at least 20% less than  
materials combined with the epoxies and vinyl esters of the  
present invention with equally long fiber reinforcement.  
Because most, if not all, short fiber phenolic materials  
have tensile strengths at or below 12,000 psi with other

physical properties also being significantly below those of metals, such as cast iron tensile strength of 30,000-60,000 psi, phenolic replacement parts, even if very thick, will still not meet the requirements of many metal replacement applications.

Utilizing the present invention, replacement composite parts may be designed with physical properties equal to or even exceeding those of the original metal part. With appropriate material choice, proper compounding, proper control of fiber alignment before and during processing, the replacement parts may be designed with tensile strengths having a range of 25,000-100,000 psi or greater. Moreover, an important aspect of the present invention is that a single metal replacement part may be developed with different portions thereof having different physical properties. For example, some portions of a part might be designed to be more flexible, while other portions may be designed to be stiffer, some portions stronger, while some portions being able to resist internal pressure or external crushing.

The mandrel 16 illustrated in Fig. 3 is a cylindrical tube having each end threaded externally 18 and one end internally 20. The mandrel is utilized within a well casing so that it must be capable of withstanding large internal pressures. In order to withstand such pressures, the mandrel must have high tensile and compressive strength, the preferred burst pressure being in the neighborhood of 30-60,000 psi. However, use of the mandrels are such that they remain in the well bore as previously indicated. Therefore, once the mandrels are no longer required, they must be drilled out or abraded away. Previous hereto, the process of drilling out the metal mandrel was a long and tedious one which increased the length of drilling time. This is because the metal mandrel was drilled out by using a rock drilling bit, which took excessive amounts of time to abrade away the mandrel. Alternatively, the drill string was removed from the hole to replace the rock drilling bit with a metal drilling bit to specifically drill through the mandrel, at which time the string was then removed again to

1     reinstall the rock drilling bit. Either of these  
traditional techniques increased the drilling time  
considerably. The composite structure of the present  
invention, although it has a high compressive and tensile  
5     strength, nonetheless has a low abrasion resistance which  
permits it to be readily drilled through and destroyed by a  
rock drilling bit. This reduces significantly the amount of  
time required to drill through the mandrel.

A key feature of the invention which permits the high  
10    compressive and tensile strength, but provides a limited or  
low abrasion resistance, is the high aspect ratio of the  
fibers in the composite, in addition to the choice of resins  
and fibers themselves. The aspect ratio is the ratio  
between the length of the fiber to the diameter of the  
15    fiber. In preferred form, the fibers utilized with the  
present invention are equal to or greater than 1/2 inch and  
are preferably from 1/2 - 2 inches in length. In some  
instances, the fibers can be continuous along the length of  
the sheet 10 and thus along the length of the device 16, to  
20    provide extremely high compressive and tensile strength.  
The high aspect ratio fiber which has a small diameter as  
opposed to the length of the fiber, substantially increases  
the amount of surface availability to transfer force from  
the resin to the fiber. In preferred form, the composite  
25    structure of the present invention comprises a resin of  
bisphenol-a-epoxy or vinyl ester having fiberglass fibers  
of engineering standard, high strength, or chemically  
resistant-type. Preferably, the aspect ratio is greater  
than 1,000. More preferably, the aspect ratio is in the  
30    neighborhood of 2,500-90,000 or more, in the case of  
continuous fibers, and most preferably in the neighborhood  
of 2,500-5,000.

Another advantage to the present invention is in the  
threading and thread connection of any metal replacement  
35    devices, and in particular of the illustrated mandrel in  
Fig. 3. Referring to Figs. 4 and 5, Fig. 4 represents a  
prior art arrangement utilizing phenolic resins and short  
fibers. As is illustrated, the teeth 22 of the thread  
portions 18' are for the most part void of any short fibers

24 and are generally made up of resin 26 and filler 28. Thus, the teeth 22 of the threads 18' are resin rich, which tended to cause stripping of the threads 18' under high pressure since there are relatively few adhesive fibers within the teeth 22. Referring to Fig. 5, the threads 18 of the present invention include teeth 22 which have a substantial number of the long fibers 30 therein. In fact, the teeth 22 are fiber rich as opposed to resin rich as in the prior art 18'. The fiber rich teeth 22 are due to the fact that the fibers 30 are relatively long in length and are thus pressed into the teeth 22 and, in fact, thread themselves through several teeth 22, thereby increasing their strength to act together. The results are that the thread portions of the mandrel 16, or any other device having threads 18, are very strong and do not tend to shear under high pressure.

Such expendable, molded composite devices, as replacement parts for metal components, have a wider range of application because of a number of unique features. First, the tensile properties of such composite components equal or exceed those of the original metal part, which will allow this type of replacement part to be fabricated within the same design envelope as a metal part or even less. Second, the shear strength of such a composite replacement material is possibly less than the original metal material shear strength. However, by virtue of the long fiber reinforcement being molded actually down into the threads 22 on the ends of the mandrel 16 as described above, with these fibers being long enough to pass both into and out of multiple threads, and by virtue of these long fibers being able to share the load that would be required over a relatively large area, the threads on a metal replacement composite part designed from this composite material are placed in tension as well as shear. This results in threads that perform better than any short fiber reinforced resin, and also better than is apparent from the bulk shear strength of the replacement material. Actual testing of mandrels formed from the present invention correlate with this.

1 Referring to Figs. 1-3, 6 and 7, the mandrel 16, as  
well as any other desired composite device, may be molded  
into metal replacement components using compression and/or  
transfer molding techniques. To form the mandrel 16, a mold  
5 32 having a bottom mold portion 34 and a top mold portion 36  
is provided. A rod 38 is also provided to form the center  
cavity of the mandrel 16. In the preferred form, the bottom  
mold 34 is a female mold and is operated by placing a  
10 plurality of the composite sheets 10 down within the female  
cavity 40. The center rod 38 is then placed within the  
female cavity 40 on top of the layered sheets 10. A  
plurality of sheets 10 are then placed over the rod 38. The  
upper mold 36, having a male cavity 42, is then pressed  
downwardly into the bottom mold 34 so as to compress the  
15 overlaid sheets and underlaid sheets 10 around the rod 38  
within the male and female cavities 42, 40. The male upper  
mold 36 is guided into position by guideposts 44 and sockets  
46. The female cavity 40 has threaded grooves 48 at either  
end thereof, while the male cavity 42 likewise has threaded  
20 grooves 50 at either end thereof to form the external  
threads 18 on the mandrel 16. In similar fashion, a forward  
portion 54 on the rod 38 also has threaded grooves to form  
the internal threads 20 of the mandrel 16.

In preferred form, the rod 38 and the layers of  
25 uncompressed composite 10 are positioned as illustrated, the  
molds 34, 36 being brought together and heated under  
pressure. Preferably, the composite material 10 is  
pressurized 2,500-4,000 psi for a sufficient time and  
temperature such that maximum density of the composite  
30 material and sufficient flow so that all interstices and  
junctures between the sheets 10 are completely filled.

As indicated previously, one of the principal  
advantages of the present invention is that it may function  
as a substitute for metal devices or components in a wide  
35 variety of different applications from automobiles to  
drilling well bores. Regardless of this application, the  
composite materials should be utilized in an environment  
which will not tend to degrade the composite material and  
thus reduce the strength of the composite device. Table III

below indicates a summary of the chemical resistance of composite materials constructed in accordance with the present invention as compared to the prior art phenolic composite. As can be seen from Table I, the composite device of the present invention has much better chemical resistance to a wider variety of chemical materials found in the environment than the prior art phenolic composite.

Table I

10

Chemical Resistance of Composite  
Materials Compared to Phenolic

CHEMICAL ENVIRONMENT	MATERIAL DESCRIPTION		
	III	I & II	Phenolic
Aliphatic Hydrocarbons	Good	Ex	Ex
15 Aromatic Hydrocarbons	Good	Good/Ex	Ex
Oils, Fats, Waxes	Ex	Ex	Ex
Fully Halogenated Hydrocarbons	Ex	Ex	Ex
Partly Halogenated Hydrocarbons	Good	Good	Ex
Alcohols Monohydric	Ex	Ex	Good
Alcohols Polyhydric	Ex	Ex	Ex
Phenols	Fair	Fair	Ex
Ketones	Fair	Fair	Good
20 Esters	Fair	Good	Good
Ethers	Fair	Fair	Ex
Conc. Inorganic Acids	Good	Fair	Fair/Poor
Dilute Inorganic Acids	Ex	Ex	Fair/Good
Conc. Bases	Fair	Ex	Poor
Dilute Bases	Good	Ex	Poor
Salts - Acid	Ex	Ex	Ex
25 Salts - Neutral	Ex	Ex	Ex
Salts - Basic	Good	Ex	Fair
Conc. Organic Acids	Good	Fair	Good
Dilute Organic Acids	Good	Good	Fair
Conc. Oxidizing Acids	Poor	Poor	Poor
Dilute Oxidizing Acids	Fair	Fair	Poor
Sunlight and Weathering	Good	Good	Good

30

All of the composite materials I-III included either a vinyl ester resin (III) or a bisphenol-a-epoxy resin (I & II) having 60-70 weight percent of glass fiber. Composite I had the glass fiber laid in a directional manner substantially parallel with the longitudinal axis of the sheet 10. Composites II and III were made with the glass fibers placed within the resin in a more random fashion. The phenolic material was a glass fiber reinforced phenol having short fiber lengths as described above.

35

1       The composite components of the present invention also  
2       have an excellent temperature resistance in terms of  
3       maintaining their tensile and flex strength at elevated  
4       temperatures such as found in certain engine compartments or  
5       such as found in bore holes at depth. This is true also in  
6       corrosive environments at temperatures approaching 300°F.  
7       Thus, composite devices constructed in accordance with the  
8       present invention will not tend to fail when utilized in  
9       higher temperature environments, and therefore function  
10      quite well as metal replacement components.

11       Downhole mandrel 16, as illustrated in Fig. 3, may be  
12      manufactured using the method and mold described in Figs. 6-  
13      7. Depending on the diameter of the rod 38, a thin wall  
14      mandrel yielding a larger inner diameter device, or a thick  
15      wall mandrel producing a thinner diameter device, may be  
16      manufactured. However, the burst strength of such mandrels  
17      will be different. For example, a mandrel 16, manufactured  
18      in accordance with the method and mold described above, may  
19      be made having an outer diameter of 2.375 inches and an  
20      inner diameter of 1.333 inches with a wall thickness of  
21      0.521 inches. Material strength for this, as well as the  
22      subsequent mandrel example, is 50,000 psi, and the burst  
23      strength results in about 39,085 psi. A second mandrel 16  
24      is manufactured having the same outer diameter of 2.375  
25      inches. However, a wider rod 38 is utilized so as to form  
26      an inner diameter of 1.754 inches, resulting in a wall  
27      thickness of 0.311 inches. The material strength is the  
28      same 50,000 psi, and the resultant burst strength, however,  
29      is reduced to 17,702 psi.

30       In either of these instances, however, the burst  
31      strength is significantly greater than equivalent type of  
32      mandrel made from the phenolic material described above.  
33      Utilizing the same measurements as given above, phenolic  
34      material at 12,000 psi material strength will result in a  
35      burst strength of 9,380 psi for the thick wall mandrel and  
36      only 4,249 psi burst strength for the thin wall mandrel.  
37      Therefore, it can be readily seen that a mandrel, or any  
38      other tool or component, constructed in accordance with the  
39      present invention has a significantly greater burst strength



1 than mandrels made from composite materials known previously  
hereto. These burst strengths are sufficiently adequate to  
allow the mandrels manufactured in accordance with the  
present invention to readily replace metal mandrels, and  
5 thereby have the inherent advantages of the composite as far  
as being expendable as described above.

An alternate embodiment and manufacture of mandrel 16  
utilizing the mold substantially as illustrated in Figs. 6  
and 7, is illustrated in Figs. 8-10. Fig. 8 illustrates a  
10 woven fabric 60, which is produced from long fibers, in fact  
continuous in length, woven together and impregnate with the  
resin as described above. This particular woven fabric 60  
may be utilized to produce reinforced threads on a mandrel  
16. This is performed by utilizing the same mold 32 as  
15 illustrated in Fig. 7. However, an alternate form of rod  
38' having threads 62, are provided. This is illustrated in  
Fig. 9.

As illustrated in Fig. 10, the woven fabric 60 is  
wrapped around the rod 38' and then the sheets 10 of  
20 uncompressed composite material are wrapped around the non-  
threaded portion of the rod 38' over the fabric layer 60.  
Compression molding in the matched die molds 34, 36 form the  
outside of the part or mandrel and force the fabric layer 60  
into the thread 62 of the rod 38', forming female threads on  
25 the internal diameter of the molded mandrel 64. In  
addition, if the molded mandrel 64 or other molded device  
are required to be extremely strong in tension or extremely  
stiff in bending along its major longitudinal axis, then the  
continuous fiber reinforcement applied along the  
30 longitudinal axis of the part from the woven fabric 60 will  
enhance these properties. All of these possibilities are  
realized using compression molding techniques with the  
composite of the present invention and are not available to  
a compression or injection molded part made from just short  
35 fiber reinforced phenolics as in the prior art. In  
addition, layers of the fabric 60 would also serve to  
increase burst strength as well as to serve to improve crush  
resistance of a mandrel 64.

1       As a final example, continuous fibers, spiral  
continuous fibers or braid continuous fibers can be filament  
wound in any combination with fabric layers 60 and random  
mat layers over rods 38 that are of appropriate shape. Such  
5 rods or other mold portions could be made of low melt  
temperature metal such as bismuth alloy, or of wax. Such  
techniques in combinations allow incredibly greater latitude  
in the design of high strength, engineered, metal  
replacement parts, including but not limited to easily  
10 drillable downhole products for the drilling industry, as  
well as any other type of expendable metal replacement part.

As can be seen from the above, the present invention  
provides for expendable, molded structural products and  
devices which are useful in a wide variety of industries.  
15 These are particularly useful as drillable downhole products  
for the drilling industry. The products are of sufficient  
structural and compressive strength to be able to function  
as metal replacement parts in a wide variety of  
applications. However, because of the unique nature of the  
20 present invention, the products have a very low abrasion  
resistance and thus are readily expendable or, in the case  
of the drilling industry, readily drillable and destructible  
so as to remove them from the well by simply utilizing a  
rock drilling bit, without an extensive increase in the  
25 amount of drilling time necessary. Devices produced with  
the present invention provide some unique alternatives in a  
wide variety of applications to replace metal products or  
metal components which either need to be destroyed in situ  
or wherein weight is of a major concern.

30       The foregoing description and the illustrative  
embodiments of the present invention have been shown in the  
drawings and described in detail in varying modifications  
and alternate embodiments. It should be understood,  
however, that the foregoing description of the invention is  
35 exemplary only, and that the scope of the invention is to be  
limited only to the claims as interpreted in view of the  
prior art. Moreover, the invention illustratively disclosed  
herein suitably may be practiced in the absence of any  
element which is not specifically disclosed herein.

- 1       The embodiments for which an exclusive property or  
privilege is claimed are defined as follows:
1. An expendable, molded device comprising a composite  
of resin and fiber molded into a pre-selected shape, said  
5 composite including an effective amount of fiber having an  
aspect ratio sufficient to produce a device with high  
compressive and tensile strength but having limited abrasion  
resistance.
2. The device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said  
10 fiber aspect ratio is greater than about 1,000.
3. The device as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said  
fiber aspect ratio comprises 2,000-90,000.
4. The device as claimed in Claim 3, wherein said  
fiber aspect ratio comprises 2,500-5,000.
- 15 5. The device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said  
fiber is substantially continuous and aligned in the  
direction of the major forces to be applied to said device.
6. The device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said  
effective amount of fiber comprises approximately 60-70% by  
20 weight of said composite.
7. The device as claimed in Claim 1, where said  
composite is molded at approximately 2,000-4,000 psi.
8. The device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the  
abrasion resistance of said composite is sufficiently low to  
25 permit rapid abrasion by metal.
9. The device as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the  
abrasion resistance of said composite is sufficiently low to  
permit said composite to be easily drilled through and  
abraded away by a rock drill bit.
- 30 10. The device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said  
resin is selected from the group consisting of epoxies,  
vinyl esters and polyesters, and wherein said fibers are  
selected from the group consisting of fiberglass, aramids  
and carbon fibers.
- 35 11. The device as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said  
fibers are equal to or greater than 1/2 inch in length.
12. The device as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said  
fibers are elongated and are from 1/2 - 2 inches in length.

1 13. A drillable, downhole tool for use in a well bore  
comprising a composite body of resin and fiber molded into a  
predetermined shape, said composite including an effective  
amount of fiber having an aspect ratio sufficiently high to  
5 provide said body with high compressive and tensile strength  
and low abrasion resistance to permit said tool to be  
drillable.

14. The tool as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said  
effective amount of fiber comprises approximately 60-70  
10 weight per cent of said composite body.

15. The tool as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said fiber  
is sufficiently elongated relative to its diameter to  
provide said high aspect ratio.

16. The tool as claimed in Claim 15 wherein said fiber  
15 aspect ratio is greater than about 1,000.

17. The tool as claimed in Claim 16, wherein said fiber  
aspect ratio comprises 2,500-5,000.

18. The tool as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said fiber  
is substantially continuous and aligned in the direction of  
20 the major force to be applied to said tool.

19. The tool as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said  
abrasion resistance is sufficiently low such that said tool  
is destructible in situ within said well bore by a rock  
drill bit.

25 20. The tool as claimed in Claim 13, wherein said tool  
comprises a downhole mandrel having a burst strength of  
approximately 30,000-60,000 psi.

21. The tool as claimed in Claim 20, wherein said fiber  
is sufficiently elongated to provide said high aspect ratio  
30 and is substantially aligned with the longitudinal axis of  
said mandrel.

22. A drillable downhole mandrel for use in a well bore  
comprising a composite body of resin and fiber molded into a  
mandrel, said said composite comprising an effective amount  
35 of long fiber having a high aspect ratio sufficient to  
provide said body with high compressive and tensile strength  
and sufficiently low abrasion resistance to permit said  
mandrel to be readily destroyed in situ by being drilled  
through.

1       23. The mandrel as claimed in Claim 22, wherein said  
resin is selected from the group consisting of epoxys, vinyl  
esters and polyesters, and wherein said long fibers are  
selected from the group consisting of fiberglass, aramids  
5       and carbon fibers.

      24. The mandrel as claimed in Claim 22, wherein said  
composite comprises vinyl ester having 60-70 weight percent  
fiberglass fibers.

10       25. The mandrel as claimed in Claim 22, wherein said  
fiber aspect ratio is greater than about 1,000.

      26. The mandrel as claimed in Claim 25, wherein said  
fiber aspect ratio is 2,500-5,000.

15       27. The mandrel as claimed in Claim 22, wherein said  
long fibers are elongated and aligned substantially with the  
longitudinal axis of said mandrel.

      28. The mandrel as claimed in Claim 27, wherein said  
fibers are substantially continuous along the length of said  
mandrel.

20       29. The mandrel as claimed in Claim 22, wherein said  
mandrel has a burst strength of approximately 30,000-60,000  
psi.

25       30. A drillable downhole tool for use in a well bore  
comprising a non-metallic tool body having high compressive  
and tensile strength yet effectively low abrasion resistance  
to permit said tool to be destructible in situ within said  
well bore by a rock drill bit.

      31. The tool as claimed in Claim 30, wherein said  
compressive and tensile strength are sufficiently great to  
provide a burst strength of about 30,000-60,000 psi.

30       32. The tool as claimed in Claim 30, wherein said body  
comprises a long fiber composite having resin and fiber  
combined to provide a high fiber aspect ratio.

1/4

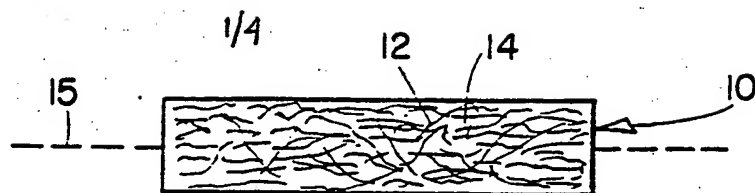


FIG. 1

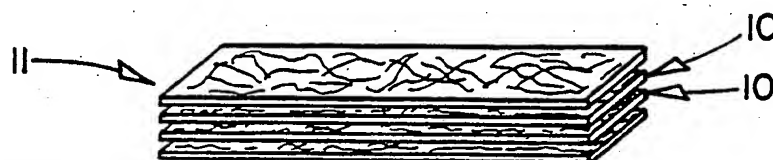


FIG. 2

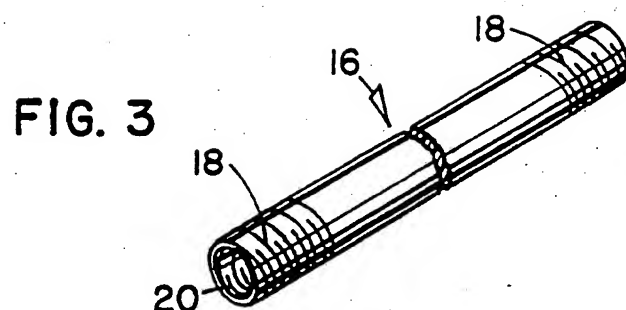


FIG. 3

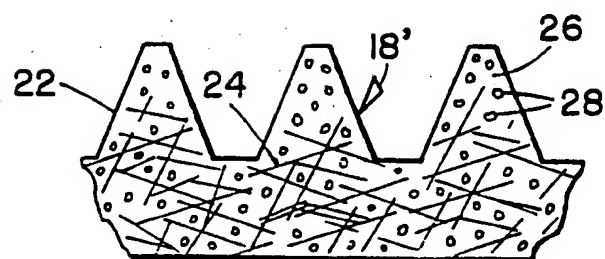


FIG. 4

Prior Art

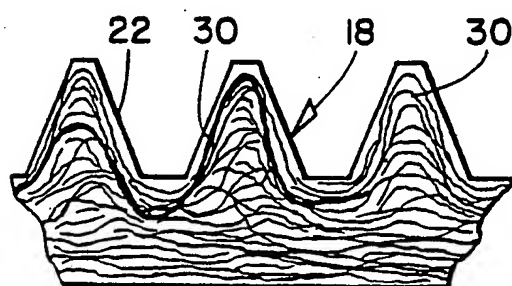
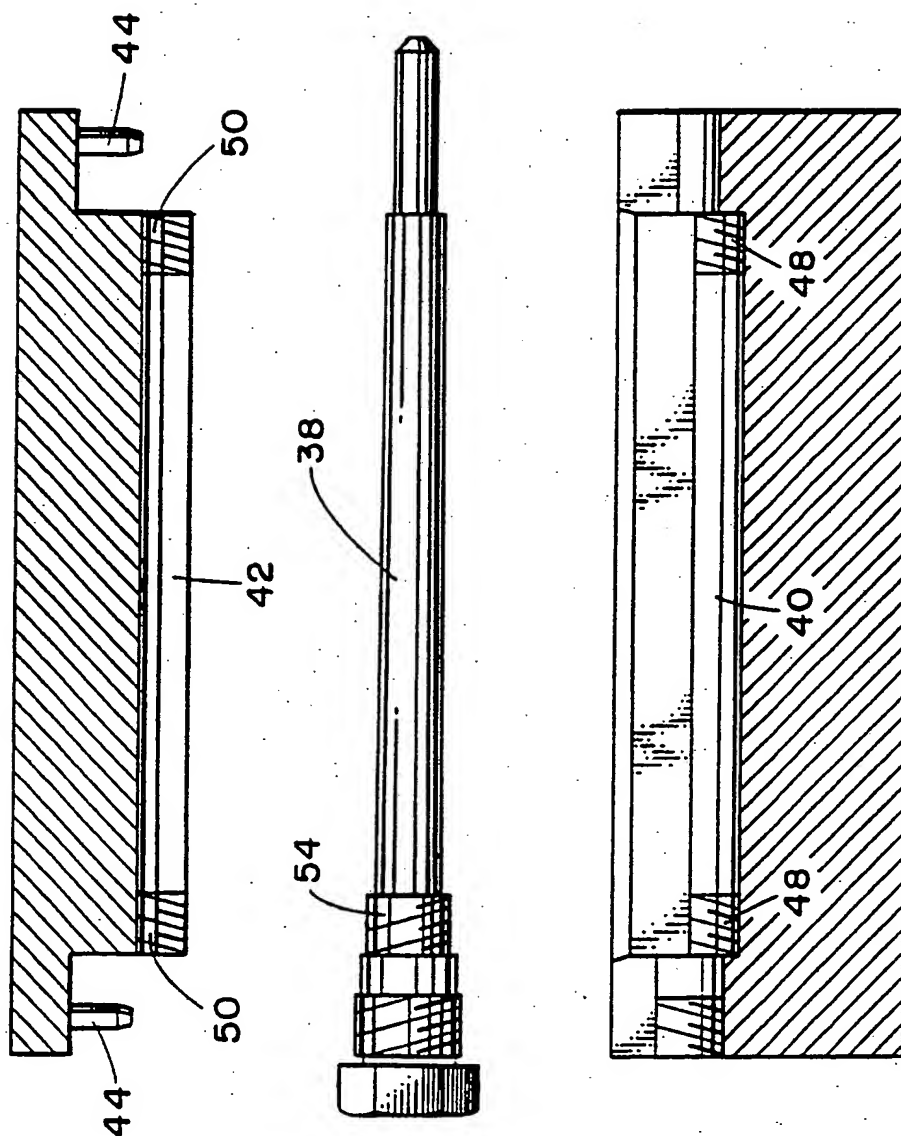


FIG. 5

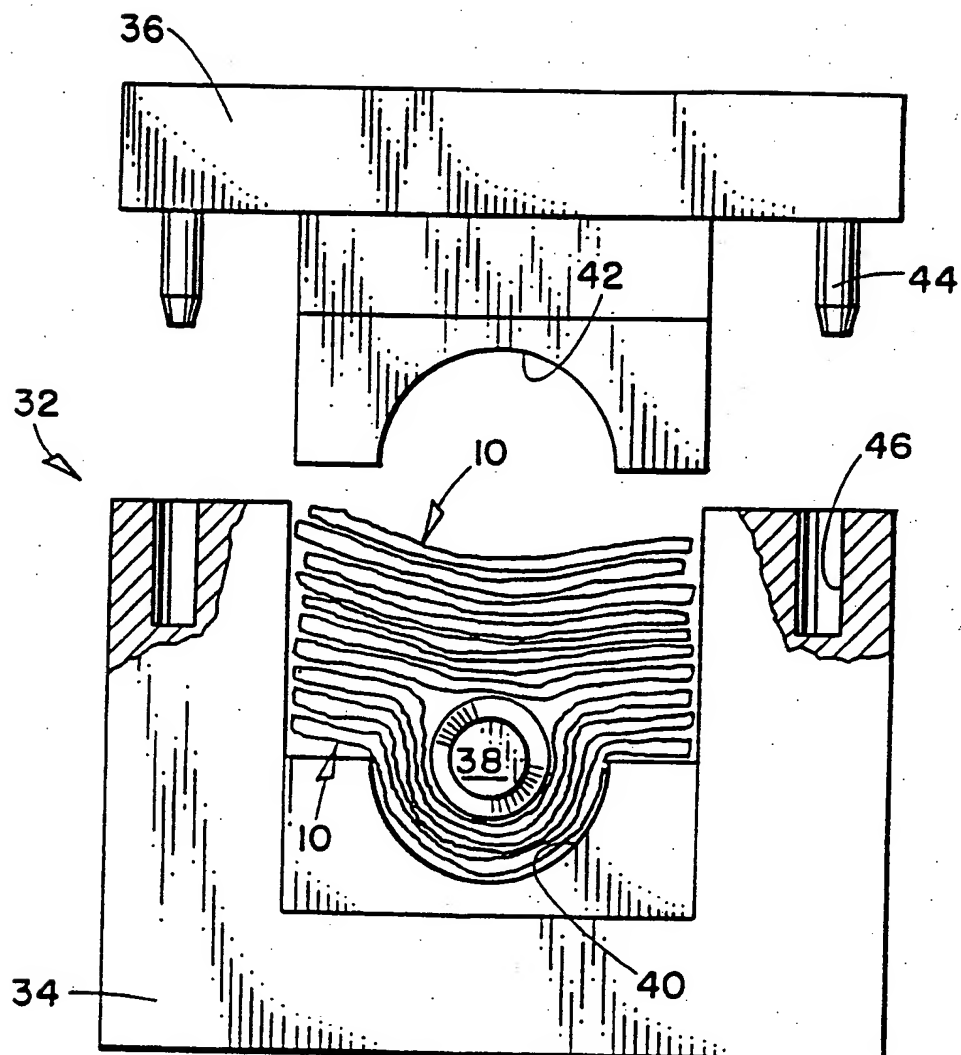
-2/4

FIG. 6



3/4

FIG. 7





4/4

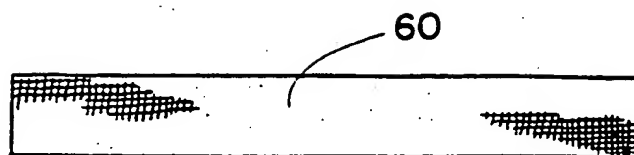


FIG. 8

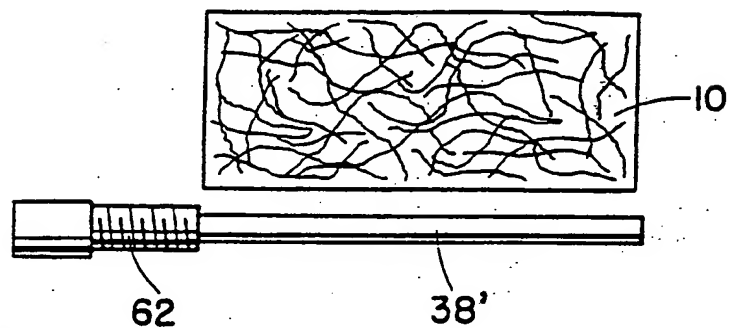


FIG. 9

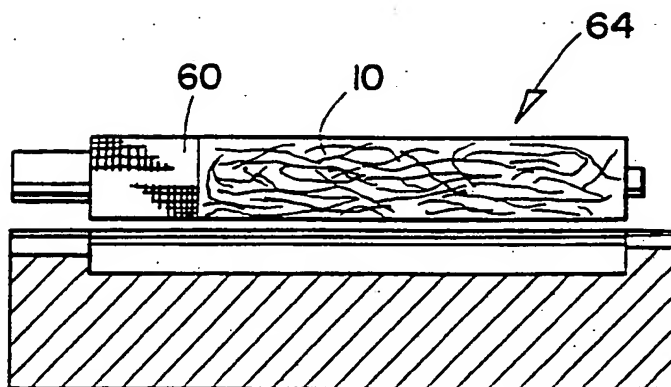


FIG. 10

## International Application No.

**1. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER** (If several classification symbols apply, indicate all)<sup>6</sup>

**II. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum Documentation Searched<sup>7</sup>

### Classification System

### Classification Symbols

**Int.C1.5**

E 21 B

**B 29 C**

**Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation  
to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched<sup>8</sup>**

### III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT<sup>9</sup>

<sup>o</sup> Special categories of cited documents : <sup>10</sup>

"&" document member of the same patent family

#### IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search

20-08-1992

**Date of Mailing of this International Search Report**

11. 09. 92

**International Searching Authority**

**EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE**

**Signature of Authorized Officer**

FONSECA Y FERNANDEZ

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT (CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET)		Relevant to Claim No.
Category *	Citation of Document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	
A	WO,A,8809263 (TEXTILVER) 1 December 1988 see page 1, lines 1-11; page 5, lines 1-11	5,18,28 ,32
A	EP,A,0324630 (RAYCHEM LTD) 19 July 1989 see claims 1,6,20	1,10,23
A	EP,A,0104958 (ALBANY INT.) 4 April 1984 see abstract; figures 1-4	5,8,27, 28
A	EP,A,0191337 (HAREN) 20 August 1986 see abstract; figure 1	1

**ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT  
ON INTERNATIONAL PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

US 9204365  
SA 61092

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on 08/09/92. The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US-A- 4708202	24-11-87	None	
EP-A- 0454466	30-10-91	AU-A- 7594991	07-11-91
FR-A- 2567807	24-01-86	None	
WO-A- 8809263	01-12-88	GB-A- 2204888	23-11-88
		AU-A- 1932788	21-12-88
		EP-A- 0368872	23-05-90
		JP-T- 3500148	17-01-91
		US-A- 4961977	09-10-90
EP-A- 0324630	19-07-89	AU-A- 2842689	13-07-89
		AU-A- 8550891	05-12-91
		EP-A- 0453053	23-10-91
		JP-A- 1238923	25-09-89
EP-A- 0104958	04-04-84	None	
EP-A- 0191337	20-08-86	DE-A- 3504829	14-08-86